

democratic. The two aldermen, Carlyll and Sybyle, who had admitted the rebels into London by the drawbridge in June 1381, were now brought up for trial, but through the favour of the Mayor and his circle escaped the halter that they so richly deserved. Probably their acquittal was designed to please the mob.¹ But a still more remarkable bid for popular favour was made by the rulers of the city. The sympathy with Wycliffe and the dislike of the clergy, which were strong in London, broke out in a somewhat absurd and even odious form. Jurisdiction in matters of sexual morality belonged, as we have already seen, to the Ecclesiastical Courts. The Church was in an anomalous and hypocritical position, for while it was her duty to punish all cases of immorality, in practice she left them alone or did worse, by exacting money instead of penance. On the indecent hypocrisy of the * Summoner ' and his master, Wycliffe poured out the vials of his wrath, and Chaucer of his scorn. In London the position was rendered still more ludicrous by the fact that the * stews' of Southwark belonged in part to the Bishop of Winchester. Wykeham drew a handsome rent from these ill-famed lodging-houses. The rest belonged to Wai worth.² One day a dense mob, headed by the Mayor himself, marched across London Bridge, raided the stews and pilloried a number of the unhappy occupants. As an act of justice it was little to be praised, and it was performed in no serious spirit. The real motive, as churchmen complained, was to protest against ecclesiastical jurisdiction by an open usurpation of the Bishop's privileges.³ Perhaps the Mayor was also aiming a blow at Walworth by exposing his discreditable property.

In the autumn of '82, John of Northampton was once more elected, and for another year London endured his extraordinary rule. He aroused ever-increasing hostility among the victualling trades by attempting to reduce the prices of all, as he had reduced those of the fishmongers.¹ Nevertheless he would have been returned again in November

¹ C. R. R., 507, Bex. 89, top of second side of MS.

* *History of ~Kent>* Hundred of Blackheath, p. 263, note, 1. 65.

« Higden, ix.

2\$.